

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application No. 09/994,729

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Claim 7 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim base, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite the subject matter of Claim 7 herein. Claim 7 has been canceled.

New Claims 12-18 have been added. Support for these new claims can be found on pages 11-15 of the specification.

Upon entry of the amendment, Claims 1-6 and 8-18 will be all the claims pending in the application.

Preliminarily, Applicants note that the Examiner lined out several references from the Information Disclosure Statement filed December 24, 2002, respectively. In a telephone conference on August 20, 2004, Examiner Buttner indicated that the lined-out references, JP 5-3931 and JP 9-117532, were not received by the PTO. Applicants submit, however, that these references were supplied to the PTO in compliance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 and should have been considered.

In order to have these references properly considered, however, Applicants submit herewith an Information Disclosure Statement listing JP 5-3931 and JP 9-117532, along with the fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.117(p). Applicants respectfully request that these references be considered.

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On page 2 of the Office Action, Claims 1-6 and 8-11 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,132,857 to Sullivan ("Sullivan") in view of Application Publication No. 2003-0139434 to Statz ("Statz").

As indicated above, Claim 1 has been amended to recite the allowable subject matter of Claim 7. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejection of Claims 1-6 and 8-11 be reconsidered and withdrawn.

With respect to Claims 12-18, Applicants submit that these claims are allowable for the same reasons that Claims 1-6 and 8-11 are not rendered obvious by the teachings of Sullivan in view of Statz.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick F. Gallagher
Registration No. 54,109

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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